

(approved November 9, 2000)

**BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES  
LICENSING / EDUCATION / LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**AUGUST 24, 2000**

**HYATT REGENCY MONTEREY  
ONE OLD GOLF COURSE ROAD  
MONTEREY, CA**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Karen Pines, MFT, Committee Chair  
Marsena Buck, LCSW Member  
Virginia Laurence, LCSW Member  
Howard Stein, Public Member

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**STAFF PRESENT**

Sherry Mehl, Executive Officer  
LaVonne Powell, Legal Counsel  
Julie McAuliffe, Administrative Analyst

**GUEST LIST ON FILE**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MARSENA BUCK MOVED, VIRGINIA LAURENCE SECONDED, AND THE COMMITTEE CONCURRED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE MAY 18, 2000 LICENSING / EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES. HOWARD STEIN ABSTAINED.

VIRGINIA LAURENCE MOVED, MARSENA BUCK SECONDED, AND THE COMMITTEE CONCURRED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE MAY 18, 2000 LEGISLATION COMMITTEE MINUTES. HOWARD STEIN ABSTAINED.

**2. LETTER TO ASSOCIATE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS PROVIDING CLARIFICATION REGARDING BUSINESS AND PROFESSION CODE SECTION 4996.21**

Ms. Mehl explained that staff has received numerous telephone calls and e-mails regarding the supervision ratio requirements that became law in 1999. This legislation was written in a very hurried manner in the

Sunset Review Committee. A letter was created and mailed to all registered Associate Clinical Social Workers (ASW) in an attempt to provide clarification. Clean up legislation may be introduced in 2001 to further clarify the requirements. The letter has assisted in clarifying the amount of supervision that is needed based on the services the ASW is performing.

Mary Riemersma, Executive Director of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, stated that the individual supervision requirement is still not clearly explained. Ms. Mehl stated that at this time we could only provide clarification based on the existing law and further clarifications will be included in the re-write of the law. Another area of confusion relates to the performance of actual psychotherapy and the need for an additional hour of supervision for every ten clients contacted. ASW's, supervisors, and employment settings are under the impression that performance of only assessment, diagnosis, or treatment would constitute the need for the additional hour of supervision when in fact the intent of the law is to only require the additional supervision when ASW's are actually performing all components of psychotherapy.

JanLee Wong, Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers, asked that the profession and the association be involved in the re-write of the law. He then indicated that he would provide recommendations before the next meeting so staff can review and draft into language.

Steve Gibson asked if a workgroup could be formed to work on these changes and asked that it include the public sector. Ms. Buck explained that the Committee functions as a workgroup and always encourages and appreciates public input.

#### **4. NUMBER OF CURRENT ACTIVE REGISTRANTS AND LICENSEES FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS**

Ms. Mehl explained that staff compiled the study and the results indicate that marriage and family therapist intern registration is dropping and associate clinical social worker registration is expanding. Schools have noticed the same with enrollment into qualifying programs. Ms. Pines stated that this study reflects a market driven trend. The Committee asked that they continue to see these types of studies.

#### **5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS**

Ms. Mehl explained that a survey was sent to all approved and accredited marriage and family therapy schools in California asking if they offer distance learning, and if they do, how is it offered and what types of courses are offered. The preliminary results indicate that the majority of the schools do not offer degrees obtained through distance learning. These results indicate that this issue is not as prevalent as the Committee thought it might be. It seems that schools realize that some courses work in this format and others do not. The Committee will need to develop guidelines regarding acceptable and non acceptable coursework taken through distance learning to assist staff in their evaluation process and assist schools when they are designing degree programs.

Ms. Laurence stated that the precedent for distance education was set early on by Smith College School of Social Work. They had a block placement in which they had the students come to the campus and take the coursework in the summer and then place them in various placements throughout the country. Other universities use this system for some of their advanced degrees.

Ms. Mehl stated that the complete survey results would be provided to the Committee at the meeting in November.

Ms. Buck stated she was curious about the empirical standards that school use to determine what they do teach through distance learning. She thought that knowing these standards would be beneficial to the Committee and could help in making some determinations regarding accepting distance learning as a means of qualifying for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

Ellen Dunbar, Director of the Social Work Program at California State University Stanislaus, commended the Committee for beginning to look at this issue. Distance learning is a broad term. It can be computer based only, interactive video or television, or on-line courses. Distance learning meets a need for expansion and is often used for classes that are full. She suggested that the Committee not try at this time to set any type of standards.

Ms. Pines stated that the Committee is limited in its authority on this issue.

LaVonne Powell, Legal Counsel, offered a definition of distance learning as any course that is taken anywhere except where the student and the teacher are in the same room.

Ms. Riemersma indicated that the professional association offers self-study courses through distance learning for continuing education. She questioned about the Board's control on this issue. The law states that the student must take the course but does not specify how the course is delivered.

Diana Hanson from Metropolitan State Hospital stated that distance learning offers some interesting challenges but is concerned about the quality of the education obtained through this method. The Council on Social Work Education has set specific standards on distance learning. She stated she is a bit critical about the Board becoming involved in setting standards for education obtained through distance learning.

Ms. Mehl asked the Committee to keep in mind that there are significant differences in the accreditation process between marriage and family therapy and social work schools.

Ms. Mehl stated that the next steps to take on this issue are to complete the survey, identify the number of schools that are offering degree programs through distance education, contact the accreditation bodies and the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education to determine if they have specific guidelines for distance education, and begin to identify specific coursework that can be taken through distance education. A bigger issue relates to intra state or country offering of distance education.

Ms. Pines stated that this is new ground and asked that this discussion continue to be included on the agenda and that the final outcome should reflect the Committee objectives and goals as well as the professional association's and public's feelings about this issue.

Ms. Mehl mentioned another issue related to education. In the late 1980's the Board gave up school approval authority. There may be a need to discuss the possibility of the Board becoming responsible again for some of the approval process.

## **6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SCHOOLS THAT OFFER AN ACCEPTABLE DEGREE FOR THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST LICENSE**

Ms. Mehl explained that this issue is one of compliance of the approved and accredited schools. Surveys are sent out yearly to ensure that schools are offering courses and degree titles named in law. The schools that were offering degree titles that were not named in law have been notified and have changed their titles to meet the law. Closer scrutiny by the staff will take place to monitor the schools. The Board does not have the authority to penalized or suspend acceptance of a school for failure to respond to our requests for current information about the degree titles and courses offered and the Committee may want to look into legislation to obtain this authority.

An audience member expressed his concern of the students being penalized if the school was sanctioned.

Ms. Powell suggested that the Committee might want to review other board's approval processes to determine which one would fit best for our schools.

Ms. Buck stated that the Committee does not want to impact students when sanctioning schools but the Committee goal is to protects consumers and she is concerned that students who think that they are getting a certain kind of education are not. She suggested that at some point the staff review the quality of education.

Ms. Riemersma stated that each marriage and family therapy school is required to certify that the degree program is designed to train students to be a marriage and family therapist. There may be a need to get back into reviewing the coursework offered in these qualifying degree programs.

Ms. Mehl explained that the Bureau of Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education (BPPVE) does the current approval process of approved schools. This bureau is currently in a major transition period, therefore the approval and disciplinary processes are lengthy. Laws are made for the ones who are not complying. There are a lot of problems with the tracking of approved schools. They often change their location, their name, and their ownership.

Ms. Mehl mentioned that Assembly bill 400 is currently waiting for signature from the Governor. This legislation would generally require applicants to have attended an accredited institution. If this legislation is approved, it may have a spill over effect to our applicants since these institutions offer qualifying degrees for marriage and family therapy and psychology licensure.

Ms. Riemersma stated that, as history as to why the Board no longer approves schools, the old Board did not want the responsibility of approving schools and released the authority to approve schools.

After discussion, the Committee decided to look further at the possibility of approving schools that offer a qualifying degree for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

Clarence Hibbs from Pepperdine University stated that he was concerned that people are applying for licensure and have not had the adequate education that is necessary. He supported the thought of the Board looking into approving schools again. He then indicated that people who pursue the marriage and family therapy license are having difficulties making a living in this profession.

Ms. Pines asked if schools are giving the students an honest idea of the job market for marriage and family therapy. Ms. Mehl indicated that the top social work and marriage and family therapy schools limit the number of students that are admitted in the programs.

A marriage and family therapist intern stated that she would have appreciated knowing the job market potentials prior to beginning her degree program.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.